

ACTION PLAN

DID YOU KNOW Many of the great changes in recorded history have come from grass root movements. Think of the American, French and Russian Revolutions, the demonstrations that ended the Vietnam War and, of course, the Women's Movement. We are on the cusp of a new era in history and it's exciting and challenging. Perhaps it will be called the Age of Sustainability. It's up to us as individuals to embrace it or not.

Before going on the Action Plan, I'd like to give you a quote from Prince Charles, made May 1st. 2007 to a business conference at St. James Palace.

*"I do not want my children and grandchildren, or anyone for that matter, saying to me, "Why didn't you do something when it was possible to make a difference and when you knew what was happening?"
We can do it. Just think what they did in the last war. Things that seemed impossible were achieved almost overnight."*

There's a chance that adults living today will be seen in the future as the generation that recklessly abused the environment out of ignorance and the pursuit of short-term pleasure and wealth. If our generation is to avoid such a nasty rap in the future, adjustments must be made now. But how much should we expect each individual to change to protect the environment? That is up to you.

What we can do as individuals to reduce our carbon footprint?

- During summer and early autumn **buy your produce from local farms**. This supports your local economy and results in less CO₂ because transportation is reduced.
- **Organic food** eschews farming techniques that rely on petrochemicals and tends to result in lower emissions per unit of food. (But is not sufficiently low-carbon if it has been flown in.)
- Items, such as **coffee**, travel long distances but choosing items marked with a fair-trade label or shade-grown, will reduce the risk that rainforests are being chopped down.
- Eat **meat free** at least one day per week. Livestock belch and excrete a substantial fraction (perhaps 20%) of the world's methane emissions. And much of the Earth's rainforest destruction is driven by clearing land for livestock.
- **Compost** as much as possible. When food is buried in a landfill, it decomposes anaerobically and generates the potent greenhouse gas methane.¹
- Use **cloth bags** when you are grocery shopping
- 1) **Plants that clean the air:** 1. Chinese evergreen, 2. Peace lily, 3 Arrowhead vine, 4. English Ivy, 5. Corn plant, 6. Devil's Ivy 7. Bamboo palm, 8. Rubber plant, 9. Gerbera daisy, 10. Florist's chrysanthemum. House plants breathe fresh air into your home or office, reducing sick-air side effects such as respiratory problems, allergies and fatigue. NASA scientist Dr. Bill Wolverton has spent more than 30 years conducting scientific research on creating breathable environment. See book list *How to Grow Fresh Air*.
- **Help save our forests:** use **paper** sparingly. Use both sides of a sheet of paper. Recycle paper. Do not use **paper towels** – use reusable cloths and throw them in the washing machine with your towels. Avoid **paper plates** at parties. Washing and drying together is good for friendships. Paper plates involve a lot of energy to manufacture and to deliver to the store – washing plates will take less energy.

¹ Ibid.313-326.

- **Your dryer** – use it less often – dry your clothes outside or on racks in your bathroom. Your clothes will last longer.
- **Carpool.** Carpooling saves gas and also helps friendships.
- Try to reduce your **air travel** as much as possible. Many CEOs and other business people are using tele-conferencing for their meetings. New flight technology to reduce emissions is in the works but will not be available for years.
- To keep yourself on track, sign up to David Suzuki’s Climate Change Newsletter – or sign up for the David Suzuki Climate challenge. www.davidsuzuki.org

There is Hope - New Technologies and opportunities

1) New Technology.

- Finding ways to trap our store CO₂ is crucial to the future of our planet
 - i) Using mine tailings to sequester CO₂ UBC geologist Greg Dipple has discovered that mine tailings are a natural CO₂ sink, and he is working to harness and fast-track nature’s mineral sequestration process. (*Synergy* UBC Science Alumni Magazine, Spring 2004)
- **Selkirk College in Nelson, BC**, is offering a new programme *Renewable Energy Technology*, slated to begin this autumn.

2) Clothing

- Eco-Fashion in Canada – enviro friendly. www.twiggandhottie.com – fabrics made from soy, organic cottons, bamboo, lyocel and wild silks.
- www.onandon.ca – recut vintage clothing
- www.fluevog.com – shoes made from recycled rubber and recycled leather
- **Colour-grown organic cotton.** Some of the worst environmental offenders are toxic dyes. U.S. based Foxfibre avoids the issue, growing cotton that has been selected for its natural shades of green, pink or brown and using the resulting fibres to create textiles with coloured patterns. www.vresels.com
- **Sakyot.** This plastic material is made from multiple layers of recycled shopping bags, melded with heat and pressure in a process that makes a collage of existing graphics. It is used in accessories, whose colours depend on the raw materials.
- www.b-goodfashion.com

3) Eco-materials. Buildings, Household

- Green Works Building Supply – specializes in enviro conscious construction goods. 386 8th Ave. W. Vancouver. www.greenworksbuildingsupply.com
- BioBased Insulation. BioBased Insulation is a blow-in expanding foam derived from soybeans that has high-performance capabilities without releasing any nasty gases. www.biobased.net
- Zelfo. A “bioplastic” natural resin composite made entirely from agricultural waste, Zelfo can be moulded into almost any shape and is biodegradable. It is being used in chairs, musical instruments (it has good acoustic properties), lamps and even coffins. www.zelfoaustralia.com.
- **House Paint** – Sico Design line available at Rona Stores is volatile organic compounds (VOC) free (VOC’s produce a form of smog)
- **Furniture.** Vancouver manufacturer Upholstery Arts has come up with a line of ecologically intelligent textiles “that are recycled from “ post consumer and post industrial fibres, free of harmful chemicals.
 - “They are also “environmentally rated to exceed commercial use standards for durability and fire safety,” and look very nice on UA’s couches and chairs.
 - There are 114 shades available and a suede texture.
 - UA’s sustainable lumber practice” has also garnered the approval of the Forest Stewardship Council, and certification by the Rainforest Alliance.

- **Shetkastone.** What can you do with all those old fashion magazines? How about making some new kitchen countertops? Shetkastone is made from recycled glossy paper that is turned into a slurry and then pressed into a hard, slick surface similar to polished stone. It can even be used to make bricks. www.shetkastone.com.
 - **Reclaimed Wood \$4/sq. ft. and up.** Saves our forests. Wood floors that used to be part of an old brickyard or railway. Reclaimed timber, salvaged from old buildings, is available from Second Wind Timber, a local company that specializes in making old wood new. www.secondwindtimber.com.
 - **Bamboo is actually a grass** but grows very quickly and acts as a **carbon sink**.
 - Using bamboo saves our forests.
 - Pampered Chef sells bamboo spoons for cooking instead of wooden spoons.
 - **Bamboo** can be grown without pesticides and is a renewable resource.
 - Best of all, it is surprisingly soft, which makes it an ideal candidate for T-shirts and underwear.
 - Bamboo flooring and fencing are wood alternatives.
 - Beautiful floors are available from many flooring manufacturers such as www.directbuy.com and many others.
 - Grove upholstery fabrics: While **bamboo** has recently been turning up on fashion circles, Grove' 100% bamboo fabric is tough enough for furniture. Soft to the touch and shiny in finish, it comes in numerous colours and various patters. www.dtex.com
 - Look out for bamboo plant pots replacing plastic pots when you go to buy your plants in the spring.
- 4) **Cell phones:** Cellphones contain a cocktail of hazardous chemicals, all of which will end up in the landfill and, potentially the groundwater, if you chuck your old handset in the garbage.
- When you send your old phone to Charitable Recycling Programme, not only do you ensure that it will be disposed of in an environmentally responsible manner, you will do another good deed at the same time – CRP will make a monetary donation to charity for every cellphone it receives, whatever its age, condition or model.
 - Some phones are refurbished and donated to vulnerable people for emergency communication, or to developing countries that lack a wired phone network.
 - (Remember to disconnect from your service provider and eras your phone's contact list before donation).
 - Phones not suitable for reuse are stripped of their components and recycled.
 - www.charitablerecycling.ca
- 5) The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) will recycle cell phones, printer and **copier ink, jet cartridges** by mailing them to “Recycle Stop” www.mcc.org/thrift/recycle.
- 6) *Staples* recycles copier ink jet cartridges